

**REMARKS**

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 24, 2006. Claims 41-80 remain pending. Claims 40, 56 and 68 are independent and have been amended in terms which more clearly define the present invention. Claim 78 has been amended to correct antecedent basis. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 41-80 were rejected as being indefinite, based on language found in independent claim 41. Independent claims 56 and 68 also included this language. As shown above, Applicants have amended independent claims 41, 56 and 68 to remove any indefiniteness and to clarify the meaning of the claims. In particular, each workflow packet is not recited as containing instructions requiring at least one of the activities. The activities themselves are the operations of the various servers when operating in accordance with the instructions in the various workflow packets.

Secondly, Applicants have amended the independent claims to recite that one of the workflow packets (i.e., the one whose processing is being described in steps (a)-(e)) contains instructions requiring at least a first activity and a second activity. The server that retrieves this workflow packet performs the first activity and then determines (1) whether the second activity the next activity and, if so, (2) if it can perform the second activity. If both of these conditions are met, the server can perform the second activity *without* having to return control back to the workflow queue. This is the advantageous “bundling” of the present invention that speeds up the overall processing, and which is not found in the prior art.

Applicants note that not all workflow packets necessarily contain instructions requiring two or more activities, and that step (f) repeats steps (a)-(e) only for those workflow packets that

do. However, the methods and system of the independent claims are able to advantageously handle any such workflow packets.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are proper and definite, and respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw this rejection.

In the Office Action, claims 41-80 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent 6,308,163 (Du et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 5,522,070 (Sumimoto). As shown above, Applicants have amended claims 41, 56 and 68 in terms which more clearly define the present invention.

Applicants believe that the Examiner is familiar with the purpose of the present invention, and will not repeat the discussion of advantages from the previous Amendment. However, Applicants believe that the claim amendments discussed above make this purpose and operation clearer, and hence make the claims more clearly distinguished from the cited prior art.

In particular, Du is directed to a system and method for enterprise workflow resource management. As noted by the Examiner, Du does not explicitly teach the use of workflow being processed by a plurality of activity servers (Office Action, page 7).<sup>1</sup> Necessarily, then, Du does not address how and under what conditions to switch from one server to another. Applicants have reviewed the cited portions of Du, and have found no such teachings.

Sumitomo was cited as teaching the use of workflow being processed by a plurality of servers. Applicants have reviewed Sumitomo, especially the cited portion at col. 6, lines 1-42, and Fig. 1. Sumitomo discloses a scheduler 13 for distributing processes to different computers based on the amount of processing required. However, in light of the amendments to the

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<sup>1</sup> The Office Action further refers to "each of said activity servers performing at least one of the plurality of activities." In fact, Applicants' claims recite that each of the activity servers is *capable* of performing at least one of the plurality of activities. Applicants further note that the claims do not exclude other servers in a system that, for a particular workflow, are not capable of performing any of the activities.

independent claims to more clearly recite that at least one of the workflow packets contains instructions requiring *two* activities in the workflow, Applicants submit that Sumitomo does not remedy the deficiencies of Du as a reference against the amended claims. Sumitomo would have to disclose, for example, distributing a workflow packet containing instructions for at least two processes to one computer and, after performing the first, determining whether the second should and can be performed next by that computer without returning to the scheduler 13. Applicants have found no such teaching in Sumitomo or any other reference of record.

The remaining claims depend from a respective one of the independent claims and partake of their novelty.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 41-80 are patentably distinct from the prior art of record.

Applicants further submit that the application is in proper form for allowance of all claims, and earnestly solicit a notice to that effect.

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Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached by telephone at (212) 969-3314 or by facsimile at (212) 969-2900. Please direct all correspondence to Customer No. 21890 at the address provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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